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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/565,059	01/17/2006	Yoshiaki Ohbayashi	0388-053673	4045

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EXAMINER

ENSEY, BRIAN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2615

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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07/31/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/565,059	OHBAYASHI ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Brian Ensey	2615	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 January 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 14-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 14, 15, 17-19, 21, 23, 25 and 26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 16, 20, 22 and 24 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 17 January 2006 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>11/28/06</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 14, 18, 21, 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chiang et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,870,939 in view of Masatake et al. Japanese Patent Publication 08-095572.

Regarding claim 14, Chiang discloses a sound detecting mechanism comprising a pair of electrodes forming a capacitor on a substrate in which one of the electrodes is a back electrode (13,17) forming perforations therein corresponding to acoustic holes and (15) the other of the electrodes is a diaphragm (5,9), wherein the diaphragm is made of at least one of a metal film and a laminated film ((N-Si and PTFE), the metal film being formed by at least one of sputtering in a low temperature process, vacuum vapor deposition and plating technique, the laminated film being formed of an organic film (PTFE), a conductive film, or any combination thereof, the back

Art Unit: 2615

electrode is formed on the substrate (11), and a spacer is formed from an organic film (polyamide, see col. 5, lines 13-17) for determining a distance between the diaphragm and the back electrode. Chiang does not expressly disclose the spacer is formed from part of a sacrificial layer. However, Chiang does teach the spacer is formed on the diaphragm module (1). The use of sacrificial layers as spacers in silicon based transducers is well known in the art and Masatake teaches a Si substrate and LB film to form organic spacers (See abstract translation). Therefore, It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the organic spacer of Chiang as taught by Masatake form a extremely thin formable spacer layer.

Regarding claim 18, the combination of Chiang in view of Masatake further discloses the organic film of the sacrificial layer uses at least one of a resist and polyimide resin for forming a void area between the back electrode and the diaphragm by etching the sacrificial layer See Masatake translation abstract).

Regarding claim 21, the combination of Chiang in view of Masatake further discloses the sacrificial layer has a thickness of 1 to 5 μm (See Chiang col. 5, lines 15 and 16, spacer is 3 μm to 10 μm thick, therefore the sacrificial would be in this range).

Regarding claim 25, the combination of Chiang in view of Masatake further discloses a signal fetching circuit (12) formed on the substrate (11) and having a plurality of semiconductor elements, a sound detecting section formed of the diaphragm and the back electrode, and an electric connecting member (18) for transmitting signals from the sound detecting section to the signal fetching circuit (See Fig. 3 and col. 5, lines 22-24 and lines 43-47).

Regarding claim 26, the combination of Chiang in view of Masatake further discloses the electric connecting member is formed of at least one of metal wires (18) and a metal film (17) formed on the substrate in a semiconductor manufacturing process (See Fig. 3).

Claims 15 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Chiang in view of Masatake as applied to claim 14 above, and further in view of Tai et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,243,474.

Regarding claim 15, the combination of Chiang in view of Masatake discloses a sound detecting mechanism as claimed. The combination of Chiang in view of Masatake does not expressly disclose the diaphragm is made of at least one of an Ni film or Cu film formed by plating technique, and stress of the diaphragm is controlled by setting processing conditions in executing the plating technique. However, the use of Cu and other metal film on a diaphragm is well known in the art and Tai teaches forming a Cu electrode as part of a laminated diaphragm (See col. 3, lines 14-19, applied by evaporation or deposited in other fashions), the stress of the diaphragm is inherently controlled by setting processing conditions in executing the plating technique. Therefore, It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form a Cu laminate on the diaphragm of Chiang as taught by Tai.

Regarding claim 17, the combination of Chiang in view of Masatake discloses a sound detecting mechanism as claimed. The combination of Chiang in view of Masatake further discloses the diaphragm is formed of a lamination comprising a base layer made of an organic film using at least one of a resist, polyimide resin and polyparaxylene resin (See col. 5, lines 3-8). The combination of Chiang in view of Masatake does not expressly disclose a conductive layer made of conductive material (Cr/Au, Al or Cu). However, the use of a conductive layer

Art Unit: 2615

made of conductive material on a diaphragm is well known in the art and Tai teaches forming a conductive layer made of conductive material (Cr/Au, Al or Cu). Therefore, It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form a conductive layer made of conductive material on the diaphragm of Chiang as taught by Tai.

Claims 19 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Chiang in view of Masatake as applied to claim 14 above, and further in view of Takehide et al. Japanese Patent Publication 2002-223499.

Regarding claim 19, the combination of Chiang in view of Masatake discloses a sound detecting mechanism as claimed. The combination of Chiang in view of Masatake further discloses a silicon substrate. The combination of Chiang in view of Masatake does not expressly disclose the silicon substrate is a monocrystal silicon substrate, and a silicon substrate of 100 orientation is used as the monocrystal silicon substrate. However, the use of a monocrystal silicon substrate of 100 orientation used as the substrate in a microphone is well known in the art and Takehide teaches a monocrystal silicon of 100 orientation used as the silicon substrate in a condenser microphone (See translation abstract). Therefore, It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to replace the substrate of the combination of Chiang in view of Masatake with the substrate of Takehide to provide a low stress diaphragm and enhance the safety in the manufacturing process.

Regarding claim 23, the combination of Chiang in view of Masatake in further view of Takehide further discloses an opening corresponding to a sound entrance is formed by anisotropic etching after the back electrode is perforated to form acoustic holes (See Takehide translation abstract).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 16, 20, 22 and 24 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian Ensey whose telephone number is 571-272-7496. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 6:00 AM - 2:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Suhan Ni can be reached on 571-272-7505. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Va. 22313-1450

Or faxed to:

(571) 273-8300, for formal communications intended for entry and for informal or draft communications, please label "PROPOSED" or "DRAFT".

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to:

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Randolph Building
401 Dulany Street
Arlington, VA 22314

Art Unit: 2615

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Brian Ensey/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2615
July 30, 2008